



STATE-LEVEL ADVOCACY

How to advocate, write a bill, and work with legislators in your state.

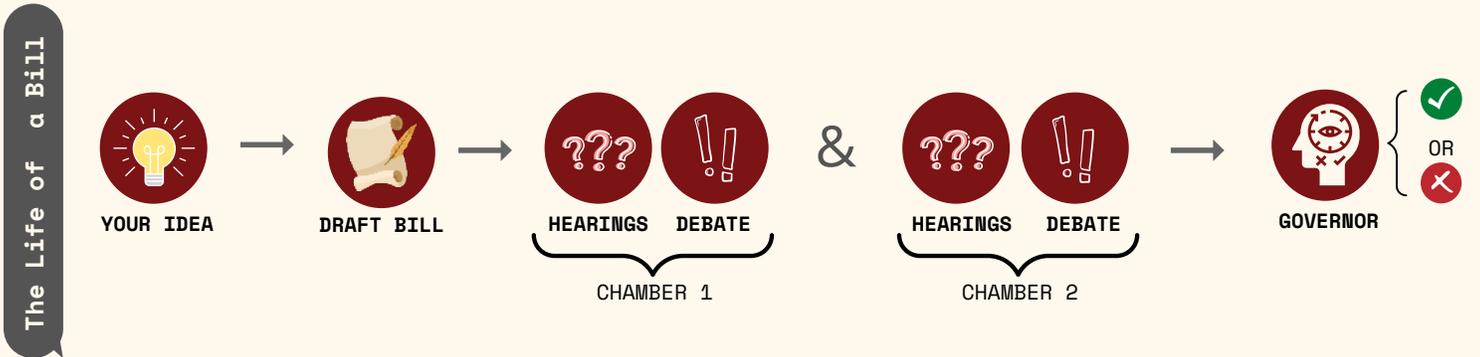


GLOSSARY

- **Legislator:** Someone who makes laws
 - i.e. A representative or a senator
- **Legislature:** The group that makes the laws
 - i.e. House of Representatives, Senate, General Assembly
- **Legislation:** Introduced as bills. If approved, becomes law.
- **Staffers:** Permanent staff hired by a legislator
- **Constituent:** You! Someone who lives in a particular area
 - i.e. in a congressional district, state, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

- States' budgeting calendars are not all the same, and do not always line up with the federal cycle.
- Bills must pass both chambers (House & Senate) & be approved by the governor to become a law.
- A veto by the governor can be overridden by the chamber where it started



YOUR ROADMAP :

1. Define your goal
 - a. Increase funding, establish an annual day of recognition, implement a program, etc.
2. Map out your bill's trajectory
 - a. Is there important history to consider? Has it failed before? Which chamber will you start in?
3. Determine **who holds the power** to make the change you want to see
 - a. Can you partner with a local organization? Can you find a champion in the state House or Senate?
4. Develop your **strategy**
 - a. Finalize your targets, determine what will move them. Include the champion in this process.
5. Build a **campaign plan**
 - a. After finding a champion, create your grassroots campaign to raise awareness locally.

WHERE TO START :

- **Who** are my legislators (state representatives and state senators)?
- **What dates** are my state legislature in session?
- **How many** members are in each chamber of my legislature and what is the party composition of those chambers?
- **What is the process** for public input during committee hearings?
- **Who** is part of the state legislative leadership?
- Do my legislators have a website, social media platforms, or e-newsletters?

CREATE ACTION:

There are many actions you can include in your strategy; here are a few ideas to get you thinking:

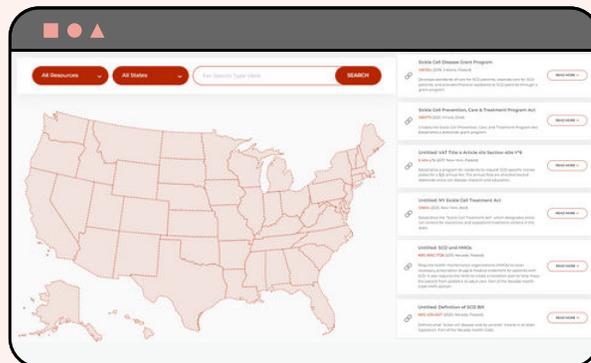
- Impact the Committee Process by **submitting letters** or **giving public testimony**
- **Meet** with your legislators and staff
- Organize a **Lobby Day** at the Capitol
- Attend a **Town Hall** or other local event
- Get **media coverage**

Other things you can do to prepare are:

- Sign up for alerts on your state legislature's website
- Learn & write down the budgeting process for your state. Some states operate on annual budgets, while others operate on biannual calendars
- Become your legislator's connection to the SCD Community
- Stay on top of current research and always fact check policies and research

QUICK TIP:

Use Sick Cells' [State Advocacy Map](#) to search for past and current legislation at the state level



CONCLUSION:

A lot of great work can happen at the state level, and funding is often higher at the state level for SCD programs than it is at the federal level for the whole country.

There are many past and current models of successful state programs in and outside of the SCD community that you can use to help inspire your work. And remember, doing work at this scale is always easier when working in a coalition or groups -- find others who are interested and use their expertise, along with your own, to make meaningful change in your home state.

